AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the

application:

1.   (Currently Amended) A method of automatically identifying and resolving one or more

discrepancies in an outsourced manufacturing supply chain in which a plurality of supply

chain partners participate, the method comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

communicating to a direct contract manufacturer a forecast for a product, wherein the

        direct contract manufacturer is a manufacturer of the product and is a supply

        chain partner in the plurality of supply chain partners;

receiving a master schedule and a gross demand for the product from the direct contract

        manufacturer;

receiving first supply chain event information representing one or more first supply chain

        events from three or more supply chain partners at three or more respective levels

        of a supply chain at a database with which each of the supply chain partners may

        communicate over a network;

periodically applying one or more rules to the first supply chain event information;

generating one or more alerts pertaining to one or more discrepancies that are found in

        the supply chain event information, based on applying the rules;

communicating in a substantially concurrent way one of the alerts to the three or more

        supply chain partners at the three or more respective levels of the supply chain

        who are participating in a transaction to which the discrepancies relate;

receiving second information that represents a second supply chain event that resolves the

        alert; and

resolving the alert in the database based on the second information.

2.   (Original) A method as recited in Claim 1, further comprising the step of periodically

escalating the alert to one or more pre-defined parties associated with each of the supply

chain partners who are participating in the transaction to which the discrepancies relate,

until the second information is received.

3. (Original) The method as recited in Claim 2, wherein the step of periodically escalating the alert comprises the steps of:

determining a set of one or more new unsent alerts;

consolidating the set of new unsent alerts by rule and by recipient;

sending the consolidated alerts to each recipient in a message that is organized by rule.

4. (Original) A method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the step of receiving first supply chain event information further comprises the steps of:

receiving the first supply chain event information in the form of one or more electronic documents that are formatted as Partner Integration Process documents in a staging database;

validating the electronic documents according to Partner Integration Process standards;

importing only those electronic documents that are validated successfully into an alerts database that is logically separate from the staging database.

5. (Original) A method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the steps of generating and resolving further comprise the steps of:

periodically evaluating one or more existing alerts that are stored in an alerts table of the database;

determining whether a particular existing alert is marked as resolved; and

removing the particular existing alert from the alerts table.

6-11 (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in Claim [[5]]1, wherein periodically applying rules comprises the steps of:

receiving a set of updated manufacturing resource planning (MRP) data from a first supply chain partner;

applying a MRP Profile rule that results in generating a user interface display that summarizes how the supply chain is affected by one or more changes reflected in the MRP data.

13-18   (Cancelled)

19.   (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of

instructions for automatically identifying and resolving one or more discrepancies in an

outsourced manufacturing supply chain in which a plurality of supply chain partners

participate, which instructions, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one

or more processors to carry out the steps of:

communicating to a direct contract manufacturer a forecast for a product, wherein the

        direct contract manufacturer is a manufacturer of the product and is a supply

        chain partner in the plurality of supply chain partners;

receiving a master schedule and a gross demand for the product from the direct contract

        manufacturer;

receiving first supply chain event information representing one or more first supply chain

        events associated with three or more supply chain partners at three or more

        respective levels of a supply chain, wherein receiving the first supply chain event

        information includes receiving the first supply chain information at a database

        with which each of the supply chain partners may communicate over a network;

periodically applying one or more rules to the first supply chain event information;

generating one or more alerts pertaining to one or more discrepancies that are found in

        the supply chain event information, based on applying the rules;

communicating in a substantially concurrent way one of the alerts to the three or more

        supply chain partners at three or more respective levels of the supply chain who

        are participating in a transaction to which the discrepancies relate;

receiving second information that represents a second supply chain event that resolves the

        alert; and

resolving the alert in the database based on the second information.

20.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus for automatically identifying and resolving one or

        more discrepancies in an outsourced manufacturing supply chain in which a plurality of

        supply chain partners participate, comprising:

means for communicating to a direct contract manufacturer a forecast for a product, wherein the direct contract manufacturer is a manufacturer of the product and is a supply chain partner in the plurality of supply chain partners;

means for receiving a master schedule and a gross demand for the product from the direct contract manufacturer;

means for receiving first supply chain event information representing one or more first supply chain events from each of at least three supply chain partners at at least three respective levels of a supply chain_at a database with which each of the supply chain partners may communicate over a network;

means for periodically applying one or more rules to the first supply chain event information;

means for generating one or more alerts pertaining to one or more discrepancies that are found in the supply chain event information, based on applying the rules;

means for communicating in a substantially concurrent way one of the alerts to at least three of the-supply chain partners at three or more respective levels of the supply chain who are participating in a transaction to which the discrepancies relate;

means for receiving second information that represents a second supply chain event that resolves the alert; and

means for resolving the alert in the database based on the second information.

21. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for automatically identifying and resolving one or more discrepancies in an outsourced manufacturing supply chain in which a plurality of supply chain partners participate, comprising:

a network interface that is coupled to the data network for receiving one or more packet flows therefrom;

a processor;

one or more stored sequences of instructions which, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to carry out the steps of:

communicating to a direct contract manufacturer a forecast for a product, wherein the direct contract manufacturer is a manufacturer of the product and is a supply chain partner in the plurality of supply chain partners;

receiving a master schedule and a gross demand for the product from the direct
contract manufacturer;

receiving first supply chain event information representing one or more first
supply chain events from three or more supply chain partners at three or
more respective levels of a supply chain, wherein receiving the first supply
chain event information includes receiving the first supply chain
information at a database with which each of the supply chain partners
may communicate over a network;

periodically applying one or more rules to the first supply chain event
information;

generating one or more alerts pertaining to one or more discrepancies that are
found in the supply chain event information, based on applying the rules;

communicating in a substantially concurrent way one of the alerts to the three or
more supply chain partners at three or more respective levels of the supply
chain who are participating in a transaction to which the discrepancies
relate;

receiving second information that represents a second supply chain event that
resolves the alert; and

resolving the alert in the database based on the second information.

22.   (Currently Amended) An apparatus for automatically identifying and resolving one or
more discrepancies in an outsourced manufacturing supply chain in which a plurality of
supply chain partners participate, comprising:
a network interface that is coupled to the data network for receiving one or more packet
flows therefrom and is configured to communicate to a direct contract
manufacturer a forecast for a product, wherein the direct contract manufacturer is
a manufacturer of the product and is a supply chain partner in the plurality of
supply chain partners and receive a master schedule and a gross demand for the
product from the direct contract manufacturer;
an alerts subsystem that is communicatively coupled to a database table that includes first
supply chain event information representing one or more first supply chain events

from three or more supply chain partners at three or more respective levels of a

supply chain;

rule logic that is communicatively coupled to the alerts subsystem and that is configured

to periodically apply one or more rules to the first supply chain event information

and generate one or more alerts pertaining to one or more discrepancies that are

found in the supply chain event information, based on applying the rules; and

alert delivery logic that is communicatively coupled to the alerts subsystem and that is

configured to communicate in a substantially concurrent way one of the alerts to

the three or more supply chain partners at the three or more respective levels of

the supply chain who are participating in a transaction to which the discrepancies

relate.

23.   (Original) An apparatus as recited in Claim 22, wherein the rule logic further is

configured to receive second information that represents a second supply chain event that

resolves the alert and to resolve resolving the alert in the database table based on the

second information.

24.   (Original) An apparatus as recited in Claim 23, further comprising alert escalation logic

that is configured to periodically escalate the alert to one or more pre-defined parties

associated with each of the supply chain partners who are participating in the transaction

to which the discrepancies relate, until the second information is received.

25.   (Original) An apparatus as recited in Claim 24, further comprising an administrative

subsystem configured to enable an administrative user to create and store one or more

values that define the pre-defined parties and one or more other characteristics of the

supply chain partners.

26.   (Original) An apparatus as recited in Claim 22, further comprising user interface

generating logic that is configured to generate one or more user interface pages for

delivery to a logically separate display station, wherein one of the user interface pages

comprises a summary view of one of the alerts, and includes one or more links to detailed views of information related to the one of the alerts that is shown in the summary view.

27. (Original) An apparatus as recited in Claim 22, further comprising user interface generating logic that is configured to generate one or more user interface pages for delivery to a logically separate display station, wherein one of the user interface pages comprises a summary view of one of the alerts, and includes one or more links to detailed views of information related to the one of the alerts that is shown in the summary view, wherein the links are selected from among a plurality of links relating to all alerts and include only links that specifically pertain to the one of the alerts that is shown in the summary view.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the supply chain partners include a set of supply chain partners with no direct contractual relationship with others of the supply chain partners.

29. (Currently Amended) The methodapparatus of claim [[1]]21, wherein the supply chain partners include a set of supply chain partners with no direct transactional relationship with others of the supply chain partners.

30. (New) An apparatus as recited in Claim 21, wherein the one or more stored sequences of instructions further comprise instructions for periodically escalating the alert to one or more pre-defined parties associated with each of the supply chain partners who are participating in the transaction to which the discrepancies relate, until the second information is received.

31. (New) The apparatus as recited in Claim 30, wherein the instructions for periodically escalating the alert comprise:
   instructions for determining a set of one or more new unsent alerts;
   instructions for consolidating the set of new unsent alerts by rule and by recipient;

instructions for sending the consolidated alerts to each recipient in a message that is organized by rule.

32.   (New) An apparatus as recited in Claim 21, wherein the instructions further comprise:

instructions for receiving the first supply chain event information in the form of one or more electronic documents that are formatted as Partner Integration Process documents in a staging database;

instructions for validating the electronic documents according to Partner Integration Process standards;

instructions for importing only those electronic documents that are validated successfully into an alerts database that is logically separate from the staging database.

33.   (New) An apparatus as recited in Claim 21, wherein the instructions further comprise:

instructions for periodically evaluating one or more existing alerts that are stored in an alerts table of the database;

instructions for determining whether a particular existing alert is marked as resolved; and

instructions for removing the particular existing alert from the alerts table.

34.   (New) An apparatus as recited in Claim 21, wherein the instructions comprise:

instructions for receiving a set of updated manufacturing resource planning (MRP) data from a first supply chain partner;

instructions for applying a MRP Profile rule that results in generating a user interface display that summarizes how the supply chain is affected by one or more changes reflected in the MRP data.